

VERTIGO



ARROW

WED 8/7c THE CW TV NOW

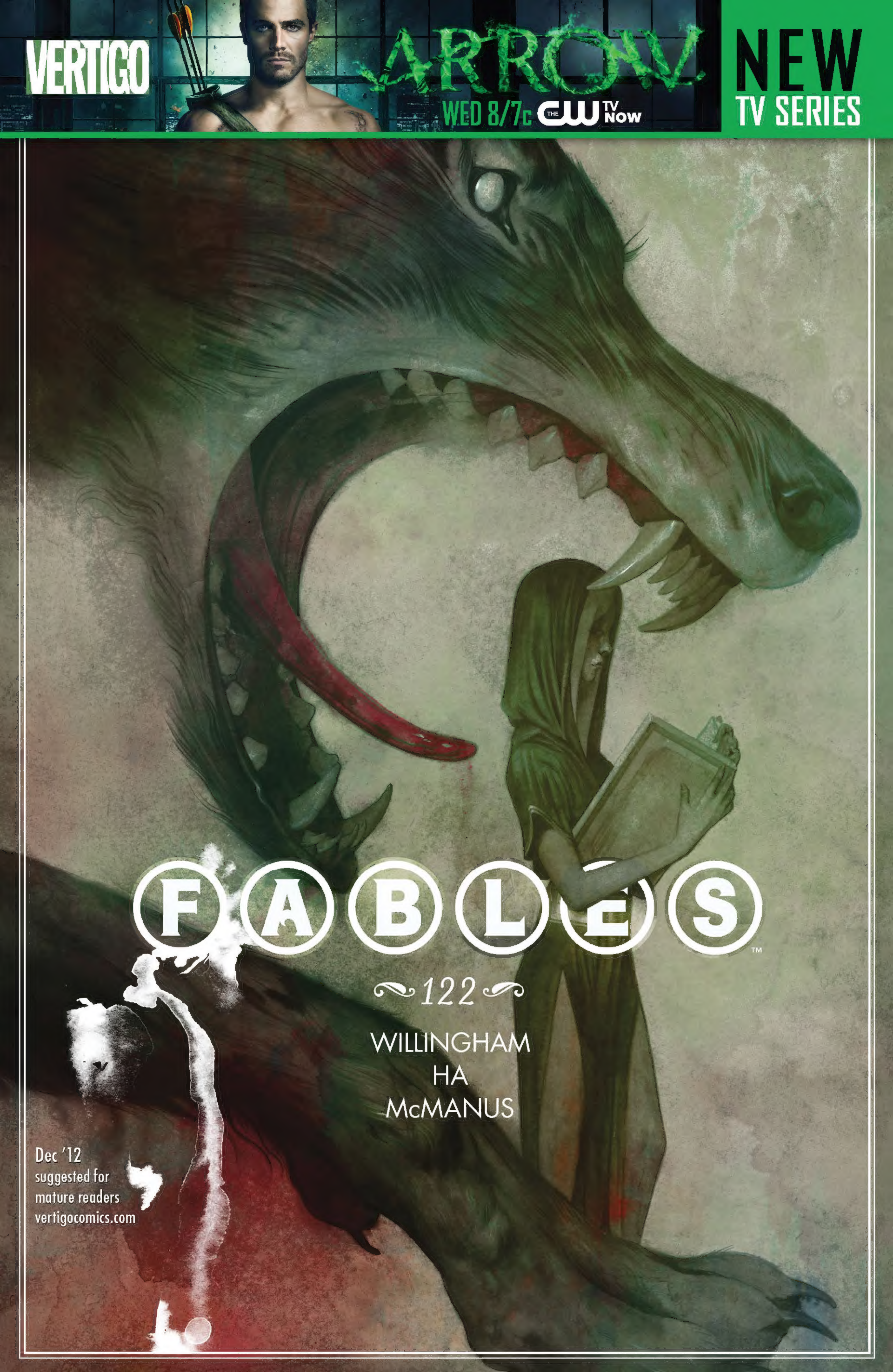
NEW TV SERIES

F A B L E S

~ 122 ~

WILLINGHAM  
HA  
McMANUS

Dec '12  
suggested for  
mature readers  
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MANY YEARS FROM NOW...

I'LL BE IN AFTER A BIT, LOVE. JUST WANT TO JOT A LINE OR TWO WHILE THEY'RE IN MY MIND.

OKAY, BUT NOT TOO LONG. YOU HAVE TO TAKE BRAGGER TO SCHOOL IN THE MORNING, BECAUSE I'VE GOT THAT THING WITH MISTER TOOMEY.

I'LL BE GOOD.

PROMISE.

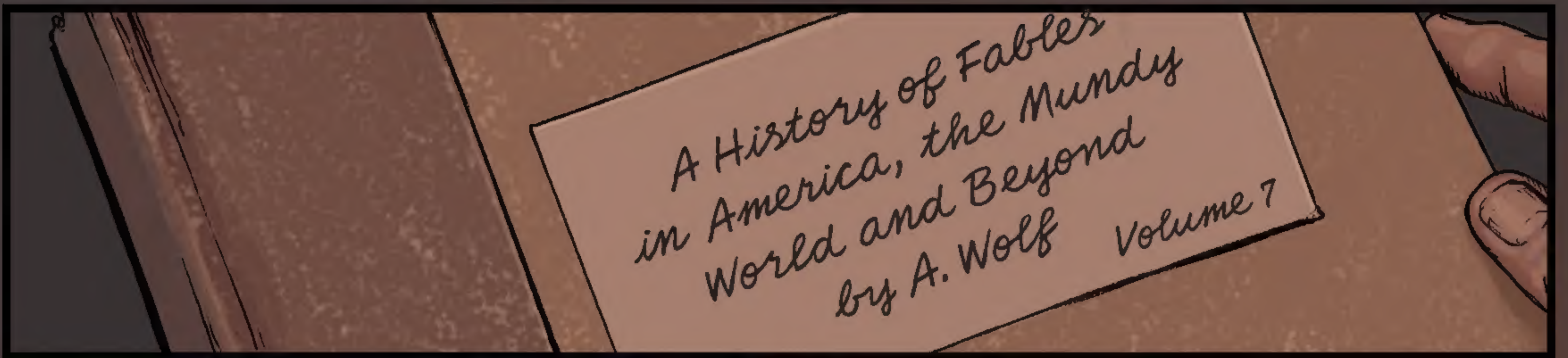
SLEEPING ON THE STAIRS AGAIN, FLANDERS?

BE THE DEATH OF ME SOMEDAY.

HOW?

TRIP ON ME AND YOU'D JUST FLY THE REST OF THE WAY. SAFE AS HOUSES.





Once more I take up my pen with an urge to leave off briefly from the main narrative and diverge (if I may be forgiven the poetic excess) onto one of the paths less taken.

I'm inspired to write of the Great Wolf, and one of his lesser-known tales—lesser known, but not lacking in terrible import for his life and the destiny of nearly every Fable he later encountered.

In those days...



# The Destiny Game *Part One of Two*

written and created by *Gene Fla*  
Bill Willingham

guest art by *Art Lyon*  
assistant editor *Gregory Lockard*

guest colors by *Todd Klein*  
editor *Shelly Bond*

letters by *Zander Cannon*  
special thanks to

In those days the Big Bad Wolf was the greatest monster to prowl the deep and dark woods known as the Black Forest.

He feared nothing, and nothing it seemed could harm or even bother him, except perhaps for too much rain on too cold a morning.

GIVE IT UP, CHILD!

YOU'VE NO HOPE OF OUTFRUNNING ME, AND I'M TOO COLD AND WET TO LOVE A LONG CHASE TODAY!



DASHING INTO A TINY HUT WON'T SAVE YOU!

I COULD SCATTER IT WITH A SINGLE PUFF!





INSTEAD  
I'LL CRASH  
IT AROUND  
YOUR--!

WHAT?!

SORCERY!

BEST TURN  
AND FLEE, DIRE  
WOLF, FOR YOU'VE  
CHASED ME  
TOO FAR.

I'M NOT  
THE HELPLESS  
LITTLE GIRL YOU  
PERCEIVED IN THE  
WOODS, AND HERE  
YOU'VE STUMBLED  
INTO MY PLACE  
OF POWER.

LOOK  
AROUND  
YOU.

GODS AND  
MONSTERS AND  
GREAT PRINCIPALITIES,  
WHO'VE FALLEN PREY  
TO MY WORKINGS, NOW  
DECORATE MY CHAMBERS  
AS STATUES AND  
COAT RACKS.

FLEE NOW,  
I ADJURE YOU,  
LEST YOU SHARE  
THEIR STONY  
ETERNITY.



STRIKE ME IF YOU *CAN*, WITCH, FOR I'M HUNGRY AND INTEND TO EAT!

NO!

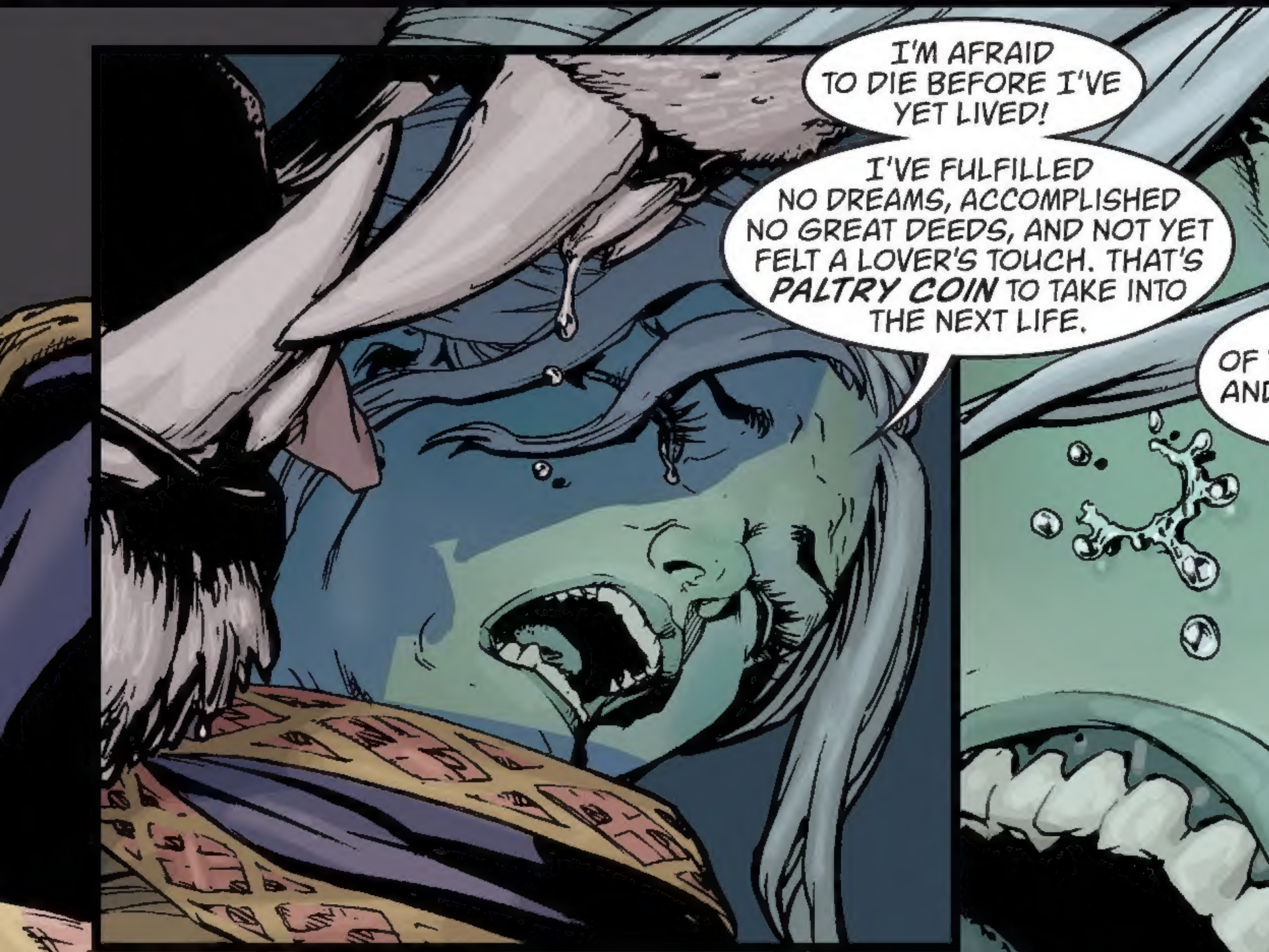


I THOUGHT SO. THOSE WHO CAN REALLY *DO* WHAT THEY PROMISE DON'T FIRST *PAUSE* TO PROMISE WHAT THEY CAN DO.



SQUEAL YOUR LAST HURRIED PRAYER, FOR HERE IT COMES!

PLEASE! I'M SO YOUNG!



I'M AFRAID TO DIE BEFORE I'VE YET LIVED!

I'VE FULFILLED NO DREAMS, ACCOMPLISHED NO GREAT DEEDS, AND NOT YET FELT A LOVER'S TOUCH. THAT'S *PALTRY COIN* TO TAKE INTO THE NEXT LIFE.

I *BEG* OF YOU, GREAT AND TERRIBLE BEAST.

SHOW MERCY!





I'VE NONE IN ME, GIRL.

THEN SHOW SELF-INTEREST INSTEAD, FOR I'VE A **BARGAIN** TO STRIKE.



EH?

WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY OFFER IN RETURN FOR YOUR LIFE?

YOUR DESTINY.



I LIED ABOUT THIS CHAMBER BEING MY PLACE OF POWER. IT'S NOT MY HOME, NOR DO I REALLY HOLD POWERS OF CONJURATION OR TRANSFORMATION.

I THOUGHT TO FOOL YOU, FOR MY **LIFE** WAS AT STAKE. BUT LOOK AT ME NOW WITH THE TRUE SIGHT I BELIEVE YOU TO POSSESS. YOU KNOW I'M NOT LYING **THIS TIME**.

I CAN DO IT.



NAME YOUR BARGAIN THEN, GIRL, AND TELL IT TRUE THIS TIME.

SWEAR AN **OATH** NOT TO HARM ME AND I'LL TELL YOU YOUR FATE.

OH?



YOU'D MAKE SCANT VITTLES, THAT MUCH IS TRUE. AND I'VE STRIVED **ALL** MY DAYS TO MAKE MYSELF STRONG ENOUGH TO PUT MY OWN FATHER'S **THROAT** UNDER MY FANGS.

YOU CAN TELL ME IF I'M EVER TO ACHIEVE HIS DESTRUCTION?







NOW, MY FATE, GIRL. TELL IT **DIRECT**, WITHOUT THE PRACTITIONER'S USUAL OBSCURE NONSENSE AND CRYPTIC MUMBO JUMBO.

BLUNT AND UNDECORATED?

FINE.



HERE IT IS, THEN.

THREE DAYS FROM NOW YOU **DIE**, TORN TO PIECES BY A TERRIBLE BEAST, AS BIG AND BAD AS YOURSELF.



BUT--?

YOU NEVER MEET YOUR FATHER. YOU EXACT NO FURTHER REVENGES. YOU SIMPLY DIE AND ARE QUICKLY **FORGOTTEN** BY THE AGES.



THAT'S IT?

THAT'S IT. NO MERCY. NO REPRIEVE.

NOW PLEASE BE ON YOUR WAY.



*The Wolf was stricken to his core. True to his word though, he went on his way, leaving the girl unmolested.*

YOU CAN STOP HIDING IN THE SHADOWS, MAGUS ATLANTES.



THE MONSTER IS GONE AND ALL DANGER HAS PASSED.



I WASN'T HIDING IN *FEAR*, MADAM, MERELY ACTING WITH DISCRETION.

I'VE NO DESIRE FOR ANYONE, MAN OR BEAST, TO KNOW I'M KEEPING CLANDESTINE *RENDEZVOUS* WITH WOMEN FROM THE DEEP REALMS.

BUT MY SWORD ARM IS FIT AND, AS EVER, I'VE *MANY* SPELLS OF ILLUSION, DIVERSION OR DESTRUCTION AT THE READY.

HAD IT BECOME NECESSARY, I WOULD HAVE STEPPED IN AND SLAIN THE BEAST *FOR* YOU.

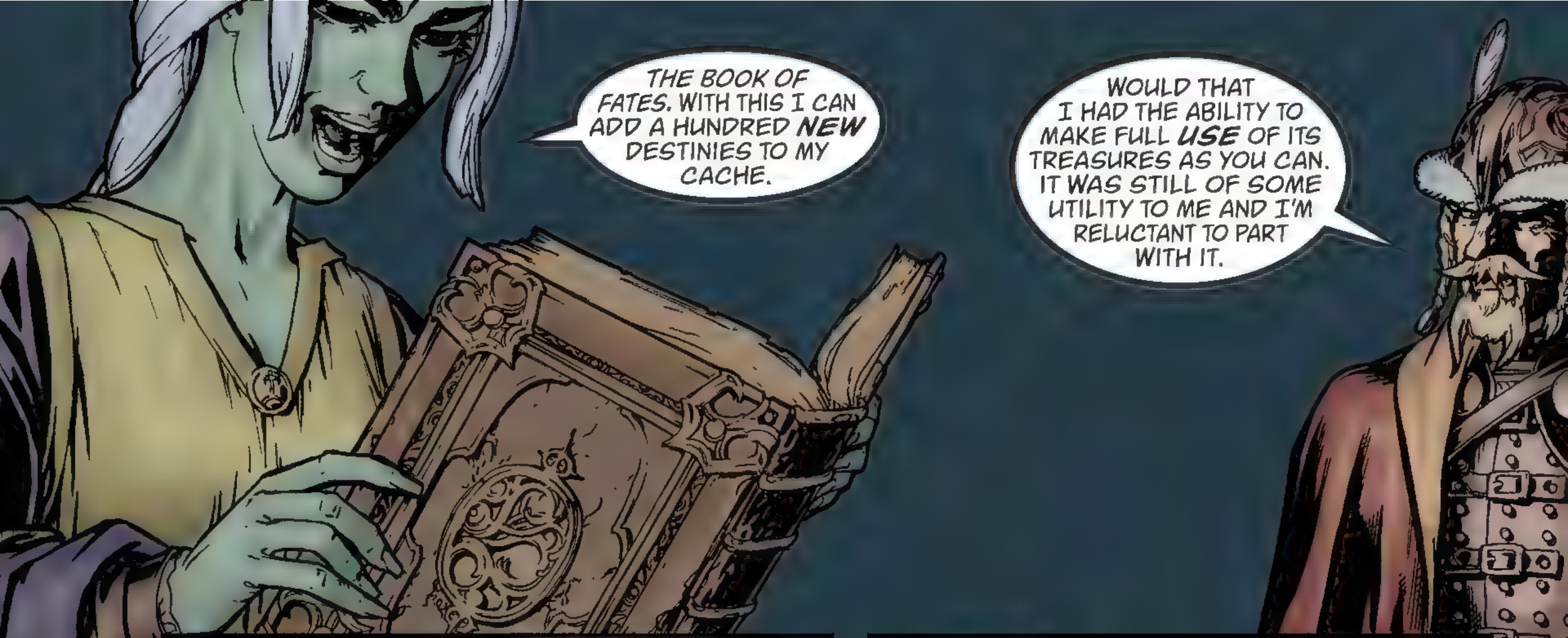
GOOD THING I WAS ABLE TO *BARGAIN* WITH THE MONSTER, FOR I FEAR HE MIGHT HAVE PROVED TOO POWERFUL FOR THE TWO OF US COMBINED.

STILL, IT'S OF NO MATTER NOW. SHALL WE CONCLUDE OUR *OWN* BARGAIN?



LET'S DO SO. I SEE YOU'VE BROUGHT THE BOOK. MAY I SEE IT?

OF COURSE.



THE BOOK OF FATES. WITH THIS I CAN ADD A HUNDRED NEW DESTINIES TO MY CACHE.

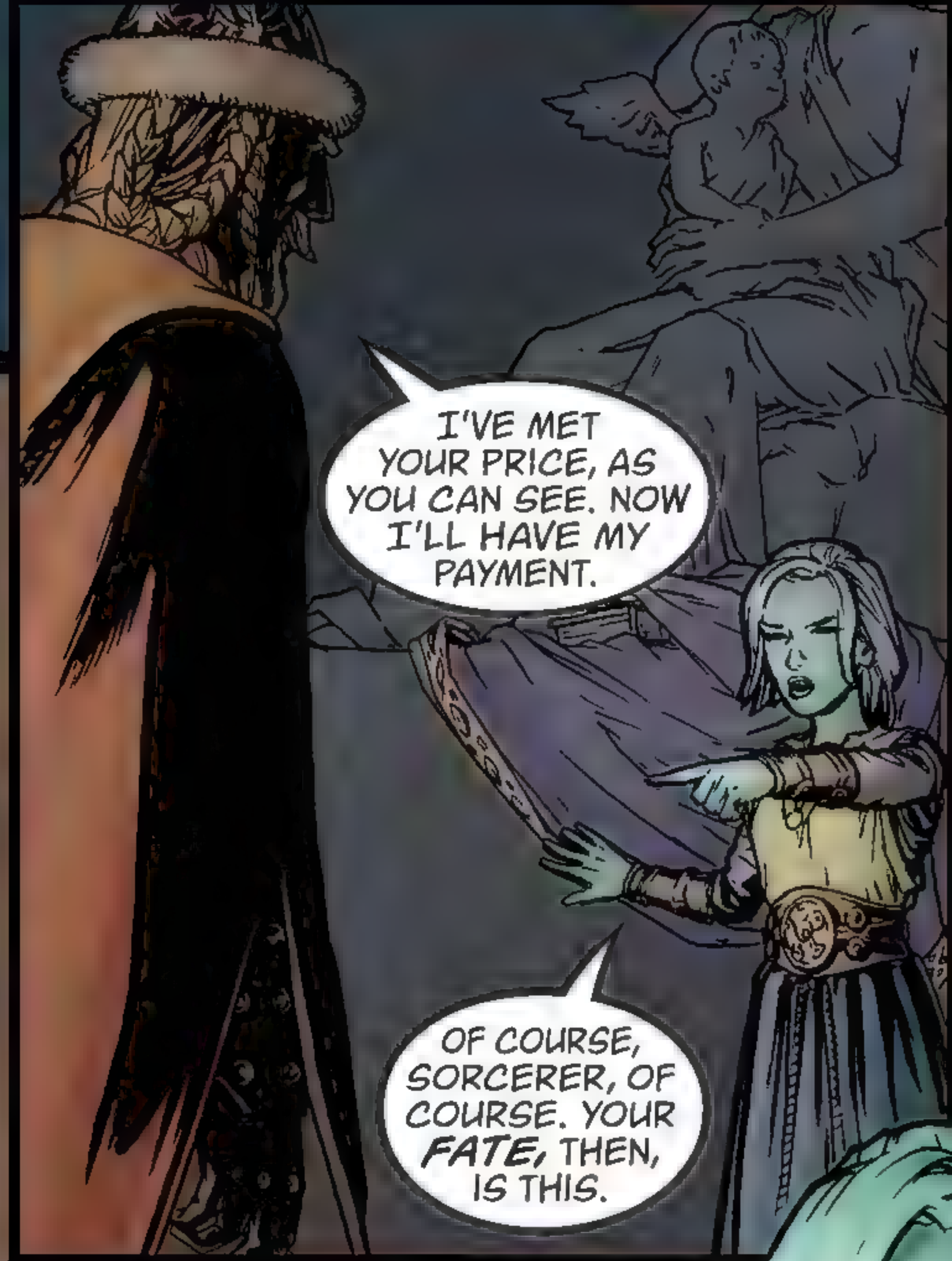
WOULD THAT I HAD THE ABILITY TO MAKE FULL *USE* OF ITS TREASURES AS YOU CAN. IT WAS STILL OF SOME UTILITY TO ME AND I'M RELUCTANT TO PART WITH IT.



AND SURRENDER THIS PLACE TOO, MAGUS. IT'S ALSO PART OF THE PRICE.

YES, THIS GRAND **CHAMBER** AND ITS PASSAGEWAYS ARE ALSO YOURS, LADY.

I'VE RECENTLY COMPLETED MY CASTLE OF ILLUSIONS AND HAVE NO FURTHER NEED OF THIS PARTICULAR HIDEY-HOLE.



I'VE MET YOUR PRICE, AS YOU CAN SEE. NOW I'LL HAVE MY PAYMENT.

OF COURSE, SORCERER, OF COURSE. YOUR **FATE**, THEN, IS THIS.



YOU WILL NOT AGE AND YOU'LL CONTINUE TO GROW IN STRENGTH AND POWER AS THE CENTURIES ACCUMULATE.

IN TIME YOU WILL MEET THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN MANY WORLDS, AND KNOW THAT SHE IS THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE.



HER SKIN AS PALE AS NEW FALLEN SNOW. HER HAIR AS DARK AS A RAVEN'S SECRET HEART. HER LIPS A RED FLOWER THAT WILL EVENTUALLY PART TO CONFESS HER LOVE FOR YOU.

SHE'LL BE STRONG IN *WILD MAGIC*, THIS ONE, ADDING HER POWERS TO YOURS AND IN TIME BEARING YOU SEVEN CHILDREN.



YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS WILL GO ON TO BECOME THE GODS AND MONSTERS THAT LAY WASTE TO WORLDS.



PERFECT. EVERYTHING I ASKED FOR AND MORE.

I TOLD YOU THIS FATE WAS BETTER THAN ALL OTHERS THAT HAVE EVER PASSED INTO MY CLASP. ANY *WONDER* THEN THAT I HELD OUT FOR A DEAR PRICE?



AND THE DOWN-SIDE? WHAT *DOOMS* ARE ALSO INCLUDED IN MY NEW DESTINY?

IT DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU CONSIDER AN UNACCEPTABLE OUTCOME.

YOU'LL OUTLIVE ALL YOUR CHILDREN, BUT ONLY AFTER YOU'VE DIED SEVEN TIMES.



WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



I DON'T KNOW.

INTRIGUING THOUGH, ISN'T IT?



NOW, I TRUST YOU'LL REMAIN FOR A DAY OR TWO TO DETAIL THE WONDERS AND INTRICACIES OF MY NEW STRONGHOLD?

AND TO MOVE MY OWN THINGS OUT, YES.

*In those days a turtle could be a magical queen, and the teacup on her back could be a vast kingdom.*



OH DEAR.

OH NO, I DIDN'T MEAN TO--

WHAT I *MEANT* TO SAY, GREAT MONSTER OF THE WOODS, IS THAT I'D NO INTENTION OF *BOTHERING* YOU WITH MY UNWORTHY INTRUSION INTO YOUR TERRITORY.


PURELY AN ACCIDENT THAT I HAPPENED TO COME THIS WAY.

AND PERHAPS I *MIGHT* POINT OUT I'D MAKE A SPARE AND TINY MEAL? HARDLY WORTH A SINGLE SNAP AND GOBBLE?

DON'T WORRY, TURTLE.


YOU'RE SAFE.






MAYBE DEVOUR HIM TOO, BUT I WASN'T QUITE DECIDED ON THAT.

EATING YOUR OWN DAD COULD GET WEIRD.




CERTAINLY, ADDING HIS MEAT TO MINE MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS TOO CLOSE A FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP, AND I WANT NO INHERITANCE FROM HIM.

SO I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE JUST TORN HIM LIMB FROM LIMB--MAYBE PISSED ON HIS ENTRAILS A BIT--AND LEFT IT AT THAT.




A WISE CHOICE, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.



IN ANY CASE, ALL THAT IS *DONE* NOW. OVER.

I'M DOOMED TO DIE TOMORROW.



DEAR ME. OF WHAT MALADY, MAY I ASK?

TORN APART BY A MONSTER OF MY EQUAL.

OH, I'LL TRY TO RALLY ENOUGH TO GIVE A GOOD ACCOUNTING OF MYSELF, BUT IT WON'T MATTER.





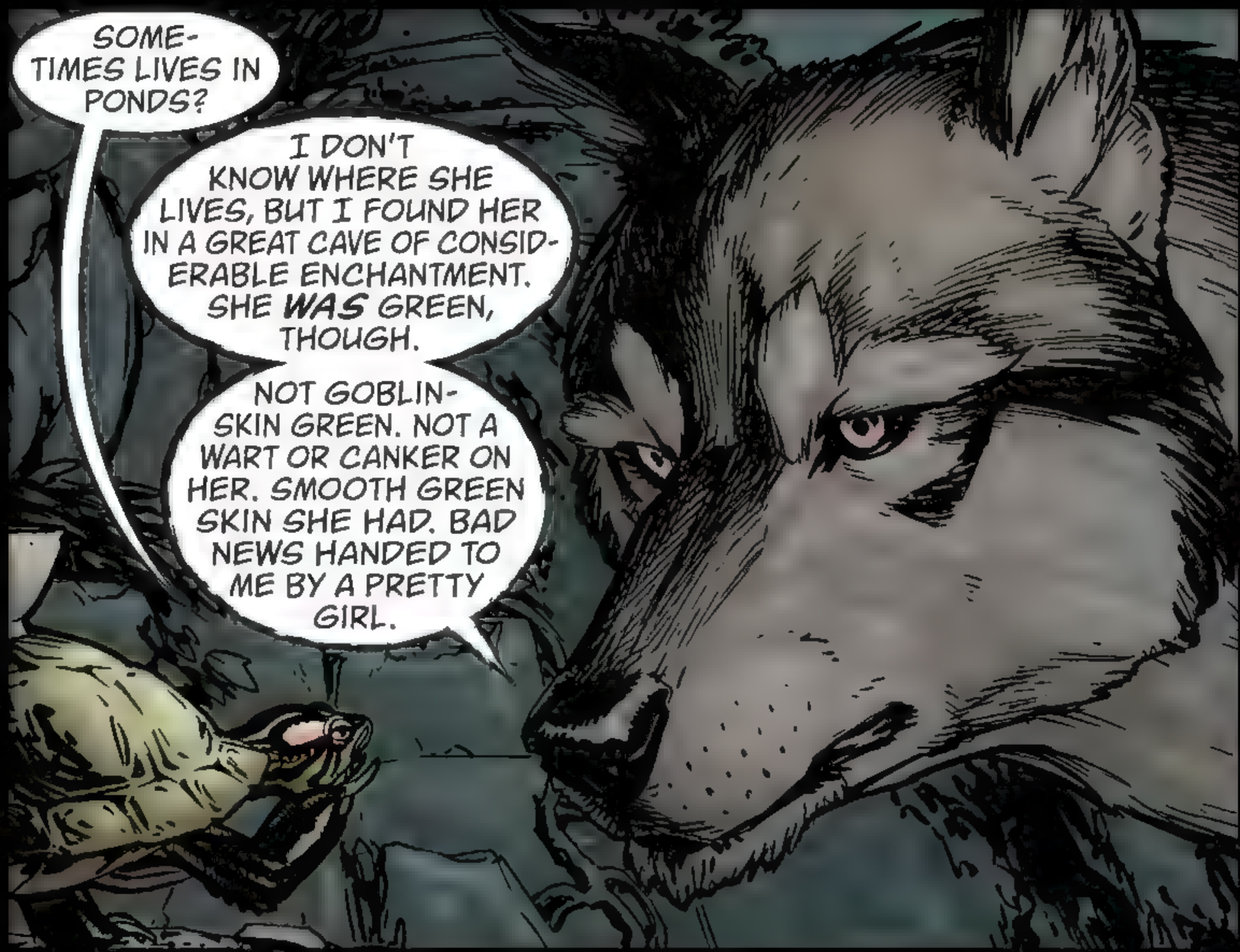
MY FATE IS SEALED.

YOUR FATE DO YOU SAY, AUGUST SIR?



YES. MY FATE WAS REVEALED TO ME ONLY YESTERDAY. TOMORROW I AM DOOMED TO DIE.

REVEALED, YOU SAY? IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO YOU VIA THE PRONOUNCEMENT OF THE GREEN WOMAN, WOULD IT?



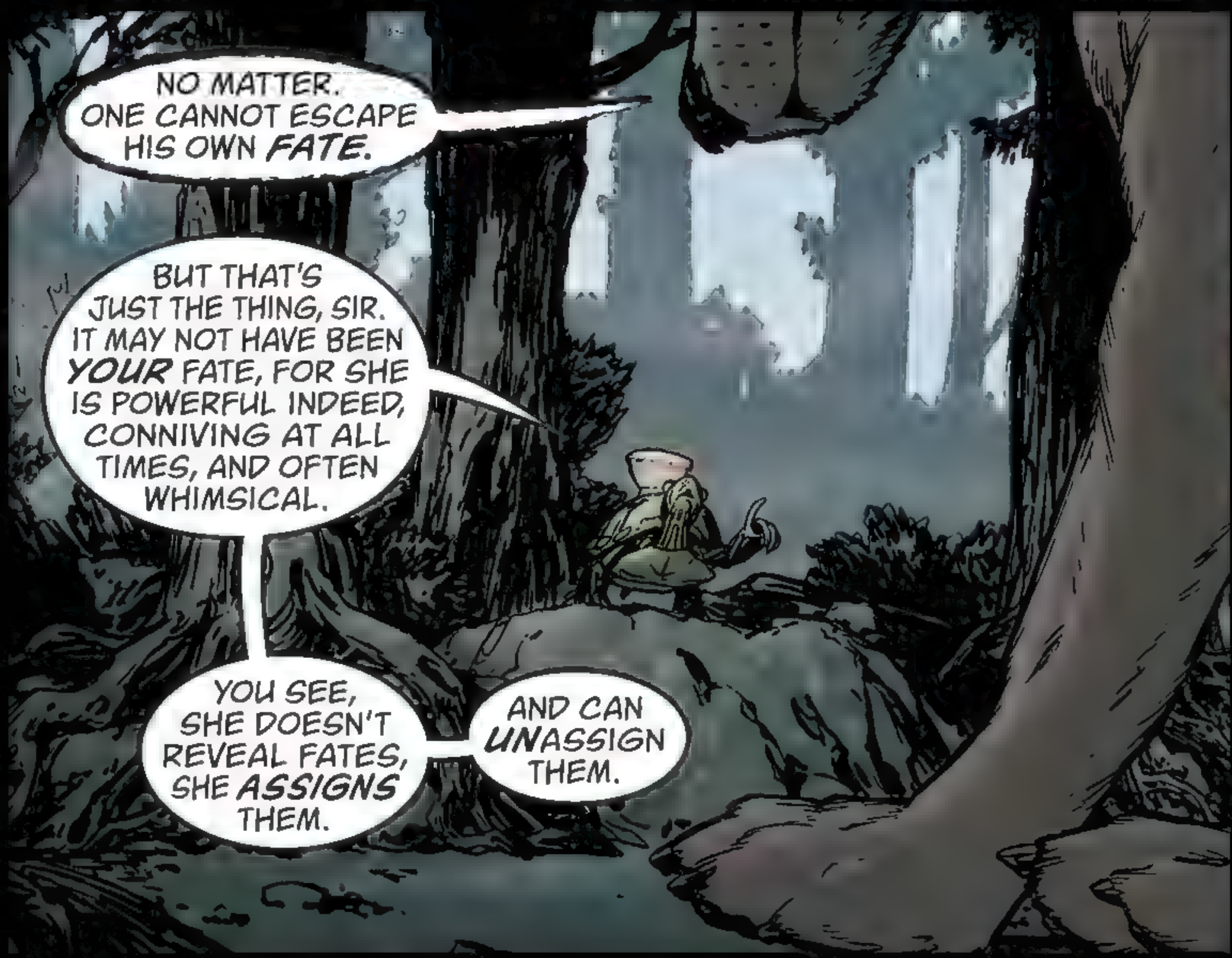
SOME-TIMES LIVES IN PONDS?

I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE LIVES, BUT I FOUND HER IN A GREAT CAVE OF CONSIDERABLE ENCHANTMENT. SHE WAS GREEN, THOUGH.

NOT GOBLIN-SKIN GREEN. NOT A WART OR CANKER ON HER. SMOOTH GREEN SKIN SHE HAD. BAD NEWS HANDED TO ME BY A PRETTY GIRL.



PRETTY PERHAPS ON THE OUTSIDE, BUT UGLY AS SIN ON THE INSIDE, FOR I KNOW OF THIS WOMAN. SHE'S A TERROR IN A NICE FROCK.



NO MATTER. ONE CANNOT ESCAPE HIS OWN FATE.

BUT THAT'S JUST THE THING, SIR. IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN YOUR FATE, FOR SHE IS POWERFUL INDEED, CONNIVING AT ALL TIMES, AND OFTEN WHIMSICAL.

YOU SEE, SHE DOESN'T REVEAL FATES, SHE ASSIGNS THEM.

AND CAN UNASSIGN THEM.



A REVOLUTION  
in  
**OZ**

Chapter Nine: ALL  
THE MARBLES

Bill Willingham  
writer/creator

Shawn McManus  
artist

Todd Klein letters

Gregory Lockard  
assistant editor

Shelly Bond editor

WHERE  
ARE WE  
GOING,  
TOM?

I DON'T  
HAVE THE  
FAINTEST IDEA,  
TOM.

FAR AWAY  
FROM HERE IS  
THE BEST I CAN  
PURPOSE.

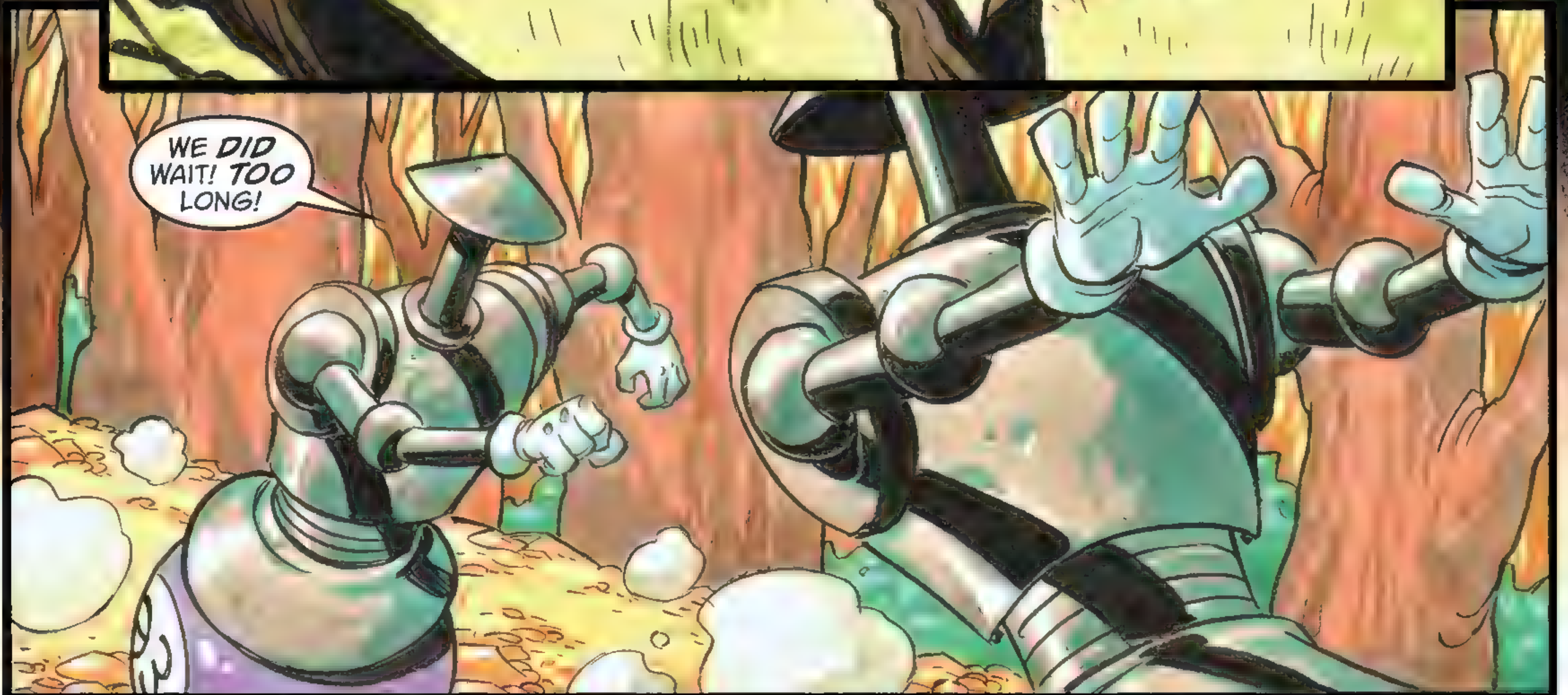
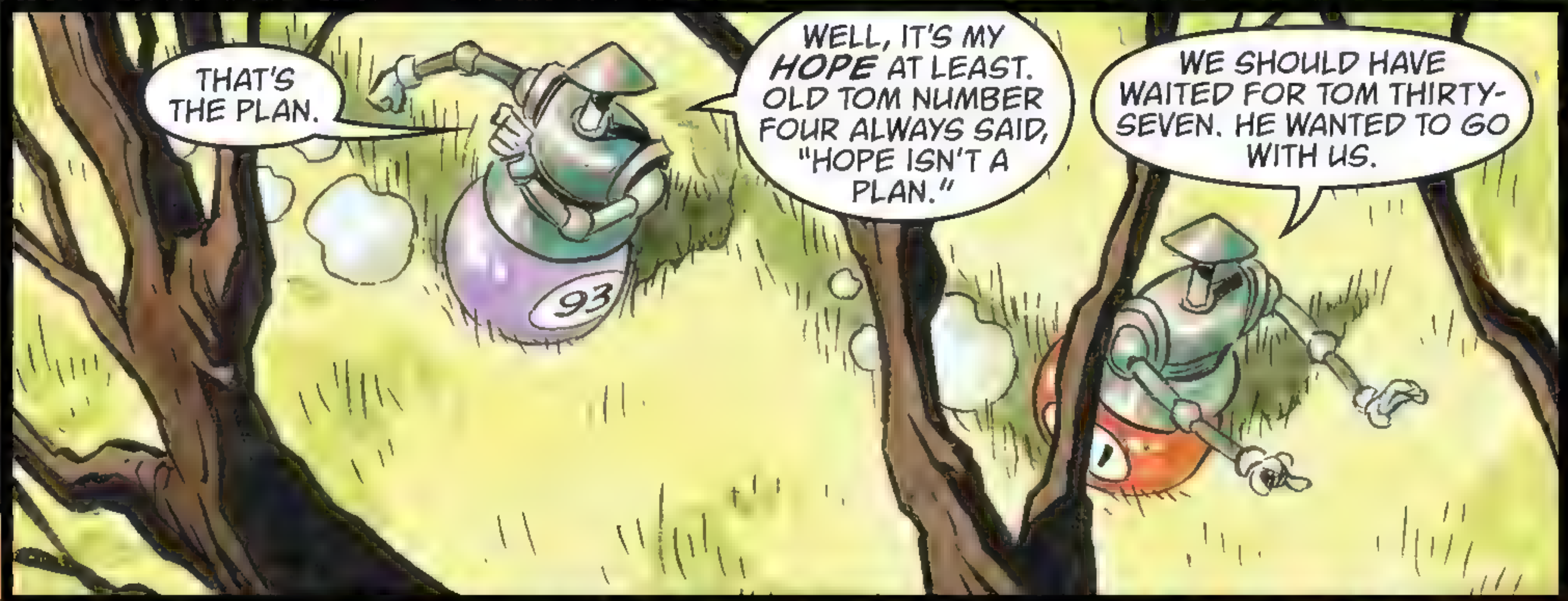
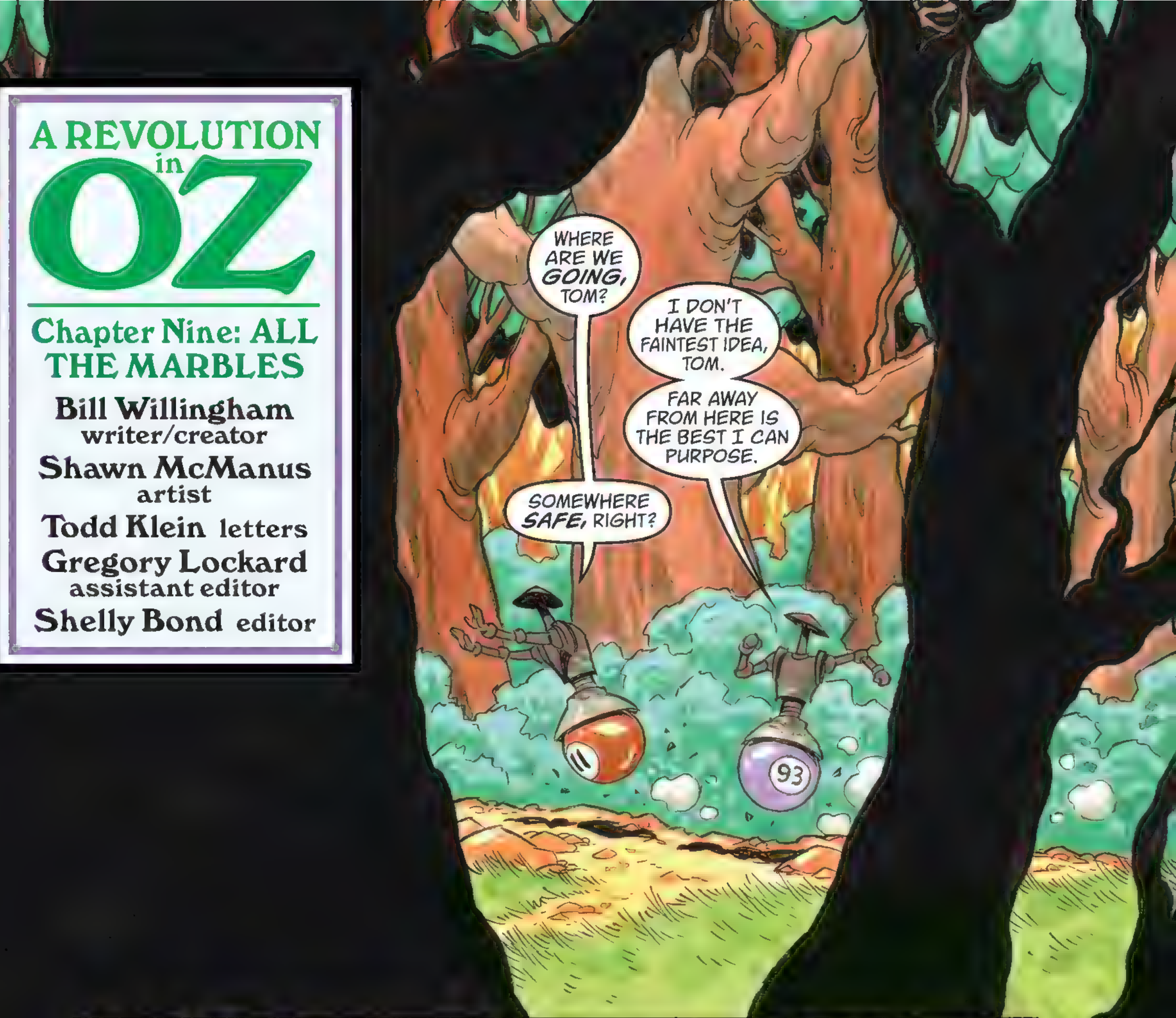
SOMEWHERE  
SAFE, RIGHT?

THAT'S  
THE PLAN.

WELL, IT'S MY  
HOPE AT LEAST.  
OLD TOM NUMBER  
FOUR ALWAYS SAID,  
"HOPE ISN'T A  
PLAN."

WE SHOULD HAVE  
WAITED FOR TOM THIRTY-  
SEVEN. HE WANTED TO GO  
WITH US.

WE DID  
WAIT! TOO  
LONG!





WE'LL HAVE TO PRESUME THIRTY-SEVEN WAS TAKEN, JUST LIKE NINE, EIGHTEEN, FORTY-FOUR AND SIXTY-ONE.

OUR ENTIRE POKER CLUB.



ALONG WITH HUNDREDS OF OTHER RUMBLE TUMBLE TOMS OVER THE PAST FEW DAYS.

SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS SINGLING US OUT IN PARTICULAR. SOMETHING FROM--

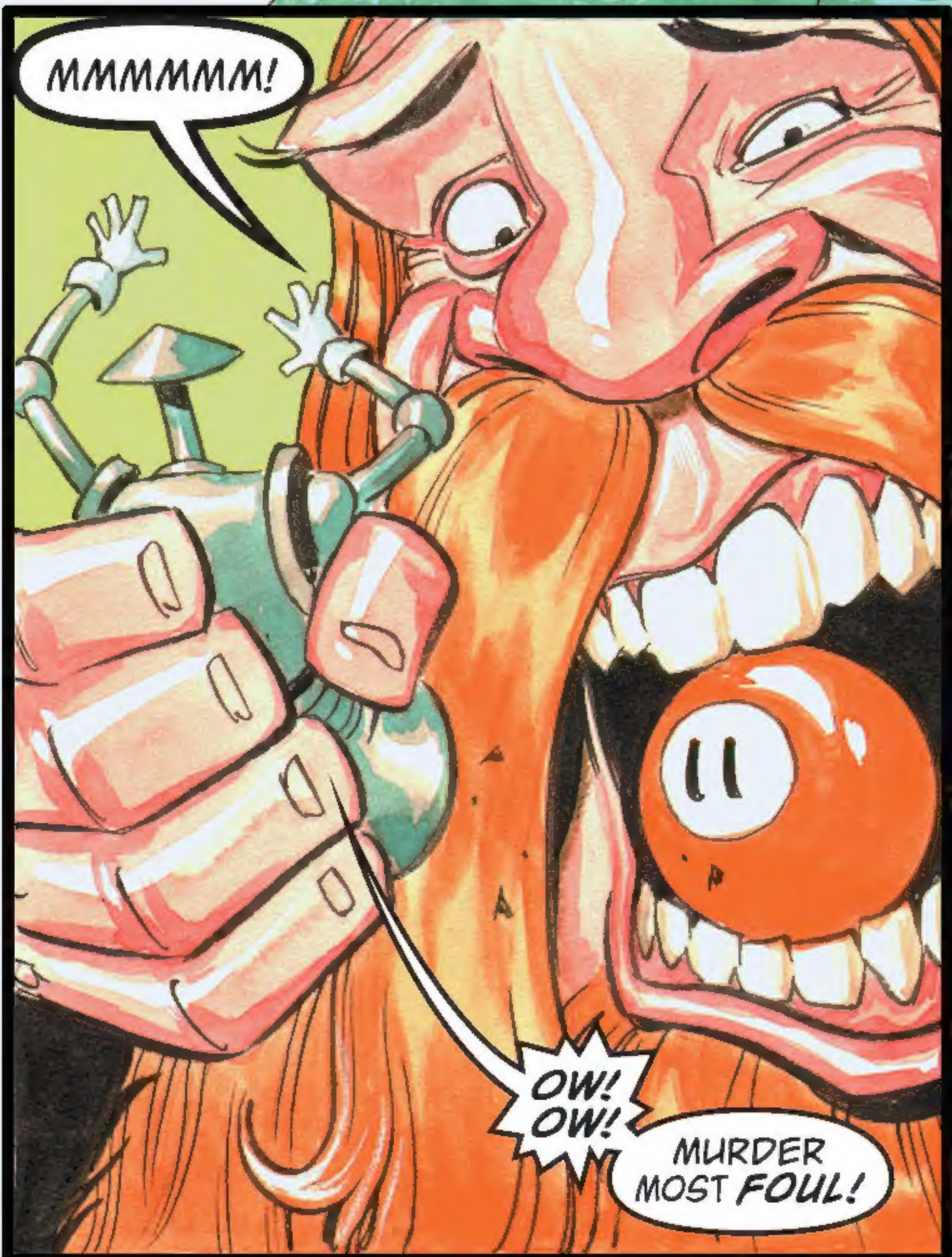
LOOK OUT, TOM!



YYYAAAII-IIIIGGHHH!!

ANOTHER ONE!

YIPPEE!



MMMMMM!

OW!  
OW!

MURDER MOST FOUL!



PHEW!

AND A LOW NUMBER, TOO!

THOSE ARE THE BEST ONES!

MORE COLLECTIBLE!

YOOP'S BUILDING THE BEST BAG OF MARBLES EVER!

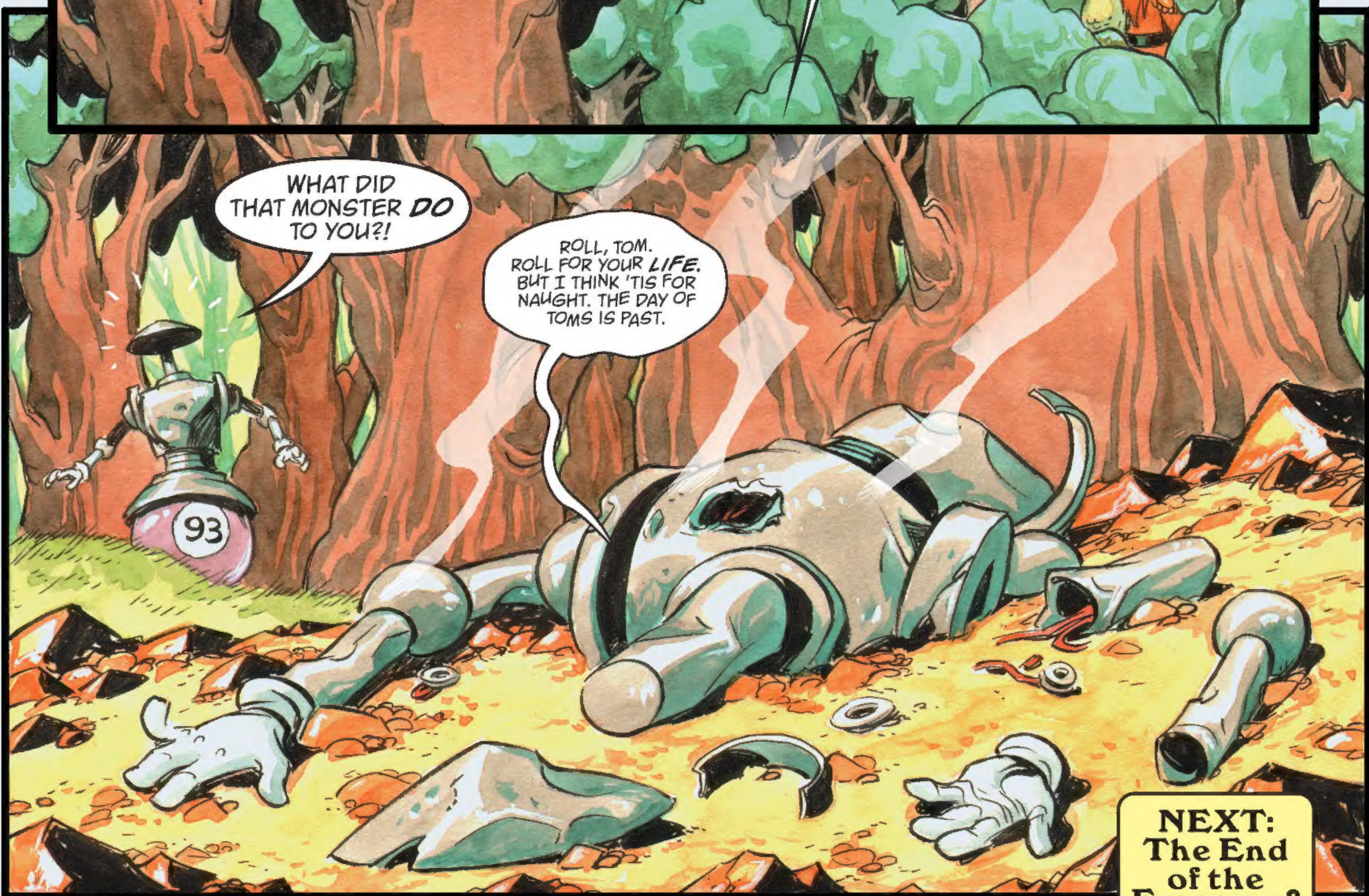
NOW WHERE DID THAT OTHER MARBLE-RIDING MAN GO?



**CRAASH!**



TOM?



WHAT DID THAT MONSTER DO TO YOU?!

ROLL, TOM. ROLL FOR YOUR LIFE. BUT I THINK 'TIS FOR NAUGHT. THE DAY OF TOMS IS PAST.

93

**NEXT:**  
The End of the Emperor?

**"FABLES is an excellent series in the tradition of SANDMAN, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty." – ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY**

# BILL WILLINGHAM

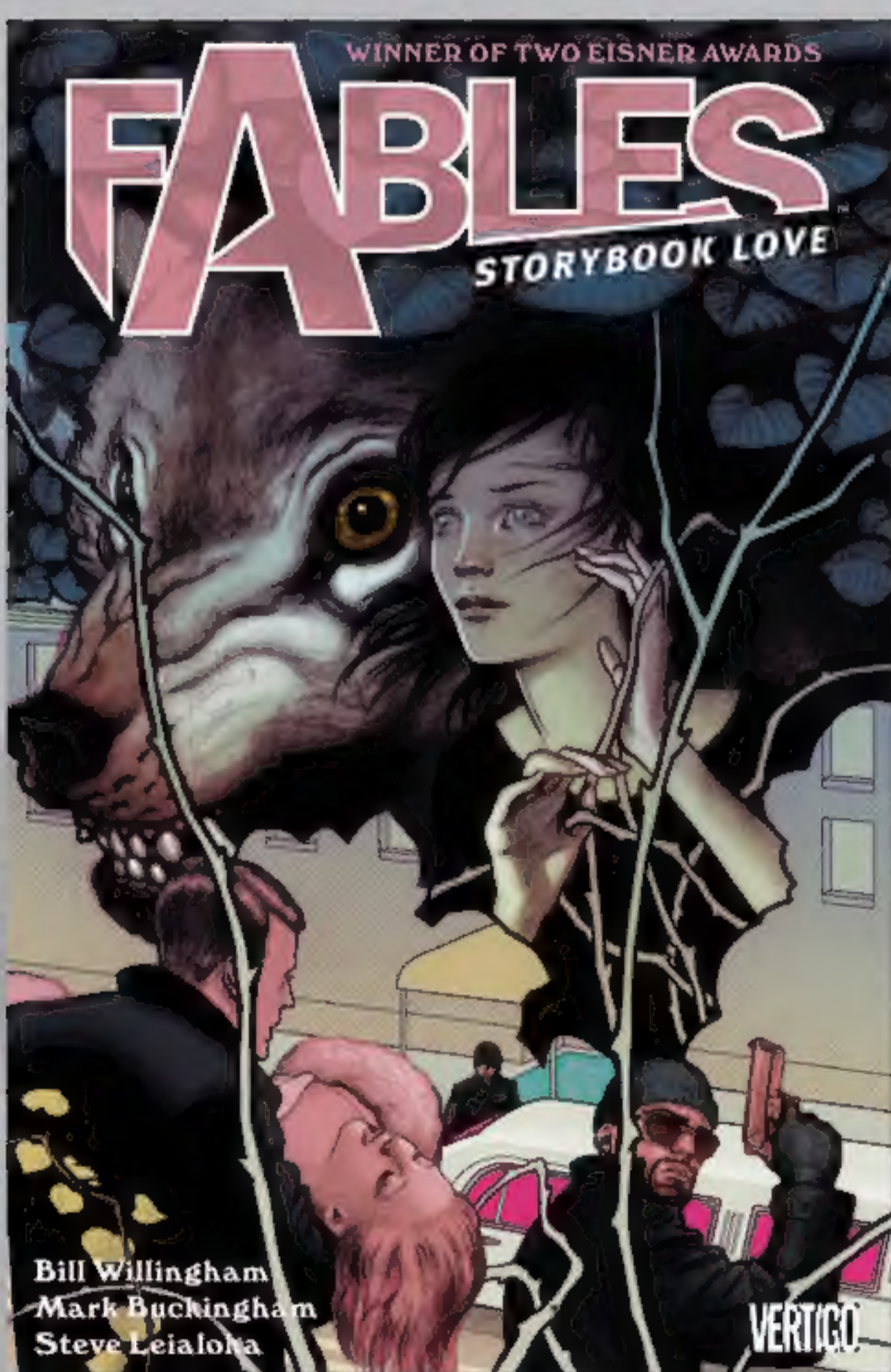
**"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York." – THE WASHINGTON POST**



- VOL. 1: LEGENDS IN EXILE**
- VOL. 2: ANIMAL FARM**
- VOL. 3: STORYBOOK LOVE**
- VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS**
- VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS**
- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS**
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)**
- VOL. 8: WOLVES**
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE**
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE**
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES**
- VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES**
- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER**
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL**



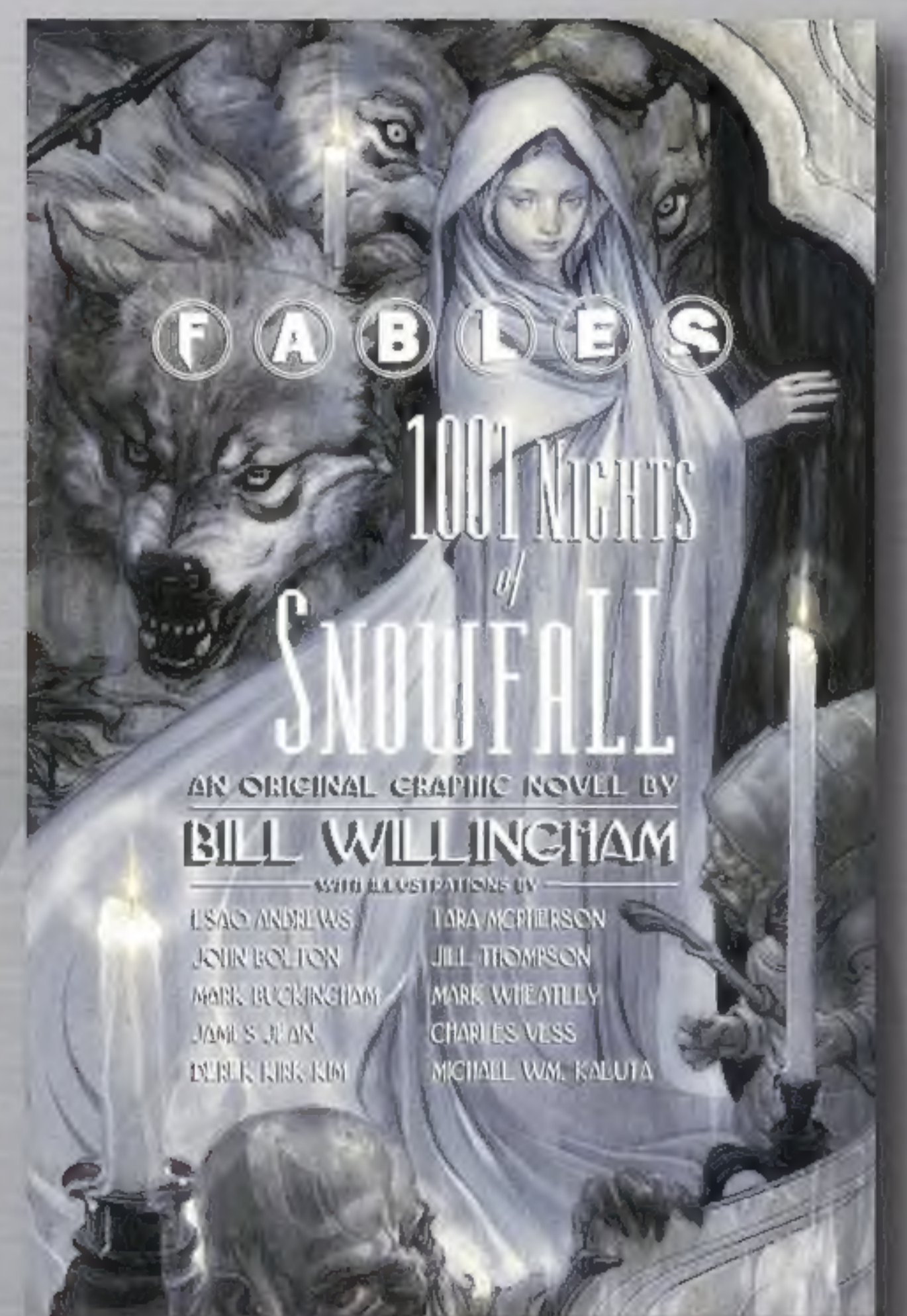
FABLES VOL. 3:  
STORYBOOK LOVE



FABLES VOL. 6:  
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Suggested for Mature Readers



NATHAN